



Tempe Public Art



John R. Nelson

Unity/Diversity, 2003

Steel, concrete, ceramic tile and
knitted polyethylene canopy

Location:

Marcos de Niza High School
Guadalupe Road west of
Lakeshore Drive

Artist Website:

www.WhoNelson.com

Photo: Craig Smith

Description: Four ethnically and gender-diverse figures sit atop steel poles and work together to provide shade and shelter by stretching a high tension, structural canopy over a semi-circular seating area. The canopy is lit at night creating a dynamic, illuminated nighttime presence. The bench and concrete floor of the seating area incorporate handmade ceramic tiles that relate conceptually to unity and diversity. The design process included the collaboration of Marcos de Niza High School students. *Unity/Diversity* is a visual and verbal narrative that captures the positive expressions and identities of this particular group of young Tempe residents, as well as providing a functional, durable shade oasis for those in transit.

Artist biography: Nelson lives and works in Tempe and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Arizona State University. As an illustrator, painter and sculptor Nelson has seen his mixed media illustrations appear frequently in publications like *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*. His paintings and sculptures have been featured in numerous solo and group shows including Gallery Materia in Scottsdale, the Carter Center at Emory University and the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. In addition, his work is collected by both public and corporate entities, including Intel and the Perrier Corporation. He has completed commissions for the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Postal Service and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

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